



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/501,280	07/09/2004	David Smith	013344-9047-00	5678
23409	7590	11/30/2006	EXAMINER	
MICHAEL BEST & FRIEDRICH, LLP 100 E WISCONSIN AVENUE MILWAUKEE, WI 53202			MILLS, DANIEL J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3679	

DATE MAILED: 11/30/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/501,280	Applicant(s) SMITH, DAVID	
	Examiner Daniel J. Mills	Art Unit 3679	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 April 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 17-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 17-26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 7/9/2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on 3/30/2006.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 17-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Claim 17 includes the limitation "third components all being of tubular" (line 4) which was not originally disclosed for the elected species.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 17-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 17 includes the limitations "the first and second components ... thus locking all the components together" (lines 4-9) which renders the claim unclear. It is

Art Unit: 3679

unclear whether applicant intends by these limitations to set forth that the components are in an interlocked state, or only that the components are capable being assembled. Further, this portion of the claim is unclear, as it is not clear which of the components has a second opening and how it lies within the hollow portion of the other component. Applicant is attempting to refer to three named components as either the "one" or "the other" which is unclear.

Claim 17 recites the limitation "the one of the components having a second opening" in line 6. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim 17 recites the limitation "the other component" in lines 5, 6, and 8. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 17, 18, 20-22, and 24-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mitsuo (JP 2001-262871).

Regarding claim 17, 18, 20-22, and 24-26 Mitsuo discloses a fence with interlocked components comprising a plurality of upright spaced apart posts (10) each post comprising a first component; at least one cross rail (20) extending between two posts, said cross rail comprising a second component (comprised of two adjacent rails

Art Unit: 3679

20); and a plurality of third components (40); the first, second components all being of tubular material; the first and second components fitting together by one of the components fitting into a first opening in the sidewall of other component and the one of the components having a second opening which lies within the hollow interior of the other component and one of the third components being forced into said second opening, to lie within the other component, abutting the inner wall of the other component thus locking all the components together, with base plate (12), with posts having a square cross-section, in which two third components are inserted into each second component (comprised of two adjacent rails 20), the two third components being spaced apart to abut respectively against opposite inner walls of the first component, thus preventing the second component (comprised of two adjacent rails 20) from moving with respect to the first component.

Mitsuo fails to disclose that the third component is tubular, however, it would have been a simple matter of engineering design choice at the time of applicant's invention to use a tubular pin rather than a solid pin to reduce the weight of the pin.

Mitsuo fails to disclose the use of plastic material for the fencing components, however, it would have been a simple matter of engineering design choice at the time of applicant's invention to use plastic material for the fencing components to improve the corrosion resistance of the fence. The selection of a known material based upon its suitability for the intended use is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Leshin, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960).

Mitsuo fails to disclose that the second and third components have a substantially rectangular cross-section, however, it would have been a simple matter of engineering design choice for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to change the shape of the components to be rectangular for improved aesthetics and cheaper construction. A change in the shape of a prior art device is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Dailey, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966).

Claims 19 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mitsuo (JP 2001-262871) as applied above, and further in view of Murphy (US 3,957,250).

Regarding claims 19 and 23, Mitsuo fails to disclose the use of foundation bars. Murphy teaches the use of foundation bars (15 and 16) to anchor the post (10) and prevent it from rotating (column 3 lines 64-68). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the arrangement of Mitsuo to use foundation bars to anchor the post and prevent it from rotating as taught by Murphy.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claim 17-26 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment (addition of claims 17-26) necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Daniel J. Mills whose telephone number is 571-272-8115. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on 571-272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3679

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



DJM
11/22/2006



DANIEL P. STODOLA
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600